

# WILD BOARS AND CATTLE THIEVES

OUR ADVENTURES ON SANTA CRUZ ISLAND



*J.E. Hogg*

Another most interesting article by our strenuous Californian contributor, who will be remembered as the author of "Hunting Wild Goats by Sea-plane." Still in quest of new sensations, Mr. Hogg went after wild boars on a lonely Pacific island. Not only was the sport of a very exciting description, but at the end of their stay the hunters dropped in for a thrilling battle with cattle-thieves.

**T**HAT the sight of an ugly scar on the calf of a man's leg should be the means of sending me, and two companions, off for two weeks of wild adventures on a lonely island in the Pacific Ocean, sounds more like fiction than something that actually happened. Yet that is precisely what sent us to Santa Cruz Island for what we planned to be a hunting trip in quest of wild boars, but which ended in a series of experiences far more thrilling than anything we had anticipated. The sight of the scar on the man's limb occurred just outside New York City, in the men's dressing room of a Pullman car which was bearing me home to California, after having been mustered out of the American military service a few weeks subsequent to the signing of the Armistice.

The train had not been under way many hours from the Atlantic seaport metropolis when I adjourned to the dressing-room, found a comfortable seat, and sat down to enjoy a smoke. My pipe was drawing nicely when a young man in the uniform of a Tank Corps lieutenant came in, and began to busy himself making his toilet. We were alone in the little room, and with the prospect of five days and five nights on the train

ahead of me, it was only natural that I should engage in conversation with the young officer. It transpired that his name was Gibson, and that he came from Los Angeles, my own home city to which, like myself, he was now returning.

Meanwhile Mr. Gibson had gone on making his toilet. He had divested himself of most of his clothing with the exception of his underwear, which was of the abbreviated knee-length variety. As he removed his trousers a great white scar, that ranged up the calf of his left limb almost from his ankle to his knee, was exposed. "It looks as if the Huns might have handed you a piece of high explosive shell," I said, as I noticed the scar. "No," replied the young man, "that's one I got about a year before Uncle Sam made a soldier of me. That is the result of a hunting trip on Santa Cruz Island. I was over there hunting wild boars about three years ago, and that place on my leg is where a boar got his tusk into me."

This was interesting indeed. I had often heard of the ferocious wild boars of Santa Cruz Island, and of the wonderful hunting they afford to daring sportsmen. I had often contemplated hunting there myself, but had never before met anyone who had



actually been on the island. Suffice it to say that, having met a man who possessed this information, wild boar hunting was the chief topic of our conversation during the remainder of the five long days that Mr. Gibson and I spent on the transcontinental train together. By the time the train pulled into the Arcade Station in Los Angeles, I had secured most of the information concerning Santa Cruz Island wild boar hunting that I desired. I had also obtained a letter of introduction from Mr. Gibson to Mr. Benito Ordoñez, of San Francisco, a brother of Mr. Carlos Ordoñez, who is the chief male inhabitant of the wilderness island, whose human population consists of the *personnel* of a single sheep and cattle ranch.

It was nearly three years before I succeeded in getting to San Francisco and locating Mr. Ordoñez, when I presented the letter that Mr. Gibson had given me. I found Mr. Ordoñez to be a most pleasant and obliging gentleman. I told him of my desire to visit the island, and he replied that he would be pleased to assist me in any possible way. Thereupon we began the arrangement of details, which were concluded by his giving me a letter to his brother on the island, outlining the request that I should be furnished with horses, dogs, guides, and anything else that I might need to contribute toward the success of my proposed hunting trip.

Eventually the arrangements for the trip were completed to the point of my motoring up the seacoast to Santa Barbara in company with two companions, ready to put to sea in the *Sea Wolf*, a fifty-foot sea-going motorboat that we had chartered for the voyage to Santa Cruz Island. There were stores, arms, and ammunition to be loaded aboard the boat, and the work was further increased by the difficulty of stowing three motor cycles, two of them with sidecars, which we were taking to the island to provide ourselves with speedy and dependable transportation inland once we had landed.

Captain James Eaton, a picturesque seafaring man, the master and owner of the *Sea Wolf*, had written to me in response to my inquiry concerning the chartering of his boat: "The boars are large and fierce; but for sportsmen who really enjoy hunting dangerous game, you will find on Santa Cruz Island all the thrills and adventure you are seeking." Had we known then how the old captain's words were to be verified by the events that were to follow, it is probable that we should have abandoned the trip before we started. Even before we had weighed anchor from Santa Barbara Bay the truth of the excerpt from Captain Eaton's letter was brought home to us in a most forcible manner. With my companions, Johnston and Gay, I was on the deck of the *Sea Wolf* assisting with the loading of the stores, when Captain Eaton pointed to a man swathed in bandages from head to foot, who

was limping painfully along the dock on a pair of crutches. "There's a fellow," said the Captain, "who was hunting boars on Santa Cruz Island about two months ago. He's only been out of the hospital about three days."

"Excuse me, Captain," I answered, "I want to talk with that man." With that I hurried after the bandaged figure.

### THE HUNTER'S STORY.

In conversation with the injured man, he told me that he and a companion had been hunting on the island when they cornered a large boar in a canyon. He fired three shots into the animal without doing him serious injury. With his fourth shot the gun jammed, and before he knew what was happening, the boar was on the top of him, ripping him to pieces with his six-inch tusks. But for the quick action of his companion in getting a death-dealing bullet into the boar, the hunter would undoubtedly have been killed. As it was, he had been rushed from the island to a Santa Barbara hospital almost dead from loss of blood. It had taken more than three hundred surgeon's stitches to close his wounds, and the man declared that he would wear the scars to his grave. When I told him that we were just leaving for a hunting trip on Santa Cruz, he shook his head. "Unless you've got a rifle that'll shoot dynamite," he told me, "you had better stay off that island. But if you are really determined to hunt boars, don't under any circumstances attempt to hunt alone. It's not so dangerous if there are two or more in your party, but hunting alone is almost the same as suicide if you happen to get into a jam with one of 'em. You can imagine what would have happened to me if I'd been alone! My partner killed the boar; if he hadn't, the boar would have sure killed me."

By this time Captain Eaton was tooting the *Sea Wolf's* whistle for me to come aboard, so I hurriedly thanked the injured man for the information he had given me, and swung down the rope ladder on to the deck of the boat again.

Santa Cruz Island lies in latitude 34 degrees north, and longitude 118° 45 west, one of the Santa Barbara group. The discovery of these islands dates back to the exploits of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, the Spanish navigator, who landed on Santa Cruz Island in 1542. I do not wish to burden my readers with the early Spanish history of the American Pacific Coast, but a glimpse of the history of Santa Cruz Island is essential to the understanding of the wild boar hunting that obtains there to-day. The boars are not natives of the island. They were introduced there by the Spaniards early in the sixteenth century. The story, as it was told to me in Spanish by Quate Espinosa, one of the oldest inhabitants of the island, as is follows:



After Cabrillo discovered the island, and partially explored it, he returned to Spain, and reported to the Crown that it was worthless. "The island is a mountainous semi-tropical jungle," he said in his report to the Crown, "and it is useless for anything other than a penal colony." Spain, however, was

in need of a penal colony at that time, and in 1547, some three hundred odd thieves, usurers, heretics, and diverse other culprits were loaded on board a frigate and transported to the island. The ship put into the little cove where we later landed with the *Sea Wolf*, which is known as Prisoners' Harbour. There the convicts were dumped ashore. They were supplied with a few tools, some chickens, and a few head of horses, cattle, and swine, and were told to work out their own salvation as best they could. They did. The frigate that landed them there was scarcely out of sight over the horizon before the men set to work hewing down timber on the forested mountain tops. From this green lumber they constructed the frames of some rude boats. They then killed the horses and cattle, and covered their boat frames with the skins, sealing the seams with pine resin to make them watertight. In these makeshift boats they put to sea, leaving the swine on the island. History isn't clear as to just what became of them, but it is believed that they landed safely on the California mainland, where they settled down in Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo Counties, to become the ancestors of some of the State's oldest and most respected Spanish families.

After being abandoned on the island the swine wandered off into the forests to shift for themselves as best they could, multiplying and evolving through the centuries that have followed into a race of ferocious wild boars. Santa Cruz is now literally infested with them. They have lost practically every trace

of their original domesticity, and have become powerful wild beasts, as fleet of hoof as deer. They mature enormous tusks, long hoofs, and bristles that are like wire, and are the plague of the ranch people who have sought to develop the island for sheep and cattle raising. The boars tear down fences faster than the ranchers can build them, they root up garden stuff as soon as it springs from the ground, and not infrequently they have been known to gore horses, sheep, and cattle. Young lambs are one of their favourite foods, and in the killing and eating of them they show skill and cunning, and carnivorous traits comparable to the tactics of wolves. In consequence, boar hunters are usually well-

come by the ranch people. They have put a bounty on boar snouts, and there is no closed season nor bag limit.

The *Sea Wolf* set us ashore at Prisoners' Harbour, and after our motor-cycles and supplies were ashore, Captain Eaton bade us good-bye and put to sea again. He was to come back in two weeks to pick us up. Until that time we would be entirely on our own resources, completely cut off from the rest of the world. Accordingly we busied ourselves getting our outfit in shape for transportation inland, packing up the two side-



The "*Sea Wolf*," which took the hunters and their motor-cycles to Santa Cruz.



cars with the view of moving off to some suitable point where we could establish a permanent camp.

There is no great mileage of roads on Santa Cruz Island, but there is a main road, built by the ranch people, extending across the island and to the west end of it—a distance of about twenty-one miles. By merely dropping the two sidecars, however, we were able to travel over sheep and cattle trails into the very heart of some of the best hunting country. Other sportsmen who have hunted on the island, lacking such transportation facilities, have had to seek most of their sport near the seashore or at no great distance from it.

It was mid-afternoon when we landed at Prisoners' Harbour, and the balance of the day was spent touring inland for a distance of about five miles, where we set up our camp on a grassy oak-thicketed *mesa* at the bottom of a high walled canyon. There was plenty of fallen oak for firewood, and only a few paces from our tents was a roaring torrent of pure cold water.

#### A NOCTURNAL VISITANT.

After supper that evening we enjoyed the incomparable pastime of smoking our pipes about the camp fire, and swapping yarns until we got sleepy enough to retire to our tents. We hadn't been asleep long, however, before we had an introduction to the wild life of the island. I was awakened by the sound of some animal walking stealthily among the leaves and twigs in the vicinity of the camp. I reached for my pistol and listened. Presently something went "Sniff! sniff!" from a point most startlingly near, and almost simultaneously two gleaming eyes appeared before a hole in the tent that had been burned by a spark from

the camp fire of a previous expedition. With far less ado than it takes to tell it, I drew a bead between the two eyes, and fired. With the flash and report of the weapon there was a blood-curdling snarl outside the tent, and the whole camp went tumbling out on the double-quick. A flashlight inspection outside the tent revealed that my bullet hadn't been wasted. Beneath the hole in the tent wall lay the lithe and quivering body of a civet cat. He was stone dead, with his head shattered by the pistol ball, and his whiskers powder-burned.

Next morning, after putting our camp in order, and caching our supplies out of the reach of possible marauders, we loaded our rifles and pistols and set out for the hunting ground with the motor-cycles. We stopped en route at the Ordoñez ranch to introduce ourselves to the ranch people, and to take advantage of the services that had been arranged for our hunting. We were welcomed by Señor Carlos Ordoñez, whom we found to be as thorough a gentleman as his brother, whom I had met in San Francisco. The hospitality that was extended us was even greater than we had anticipated, and very shortly we were on our way into the hunting grounds with four boar dogs and Quate Espinosa, an old Spanish cowpuncher, whom Señor Ordoñez had assigned to us as a guide. Spanish is the language of Santa Cruz Island. Señor Ordoñez could speak fairly good English, but it was rather difficult for him, and out of courtesy I conversed with him in Spanish, interpreting for Mr. Gay, who was the only member of our party unfamiliar with the language. Quate and the dogs understood no language other than Spanish. The dogs were lively little fellows of terrier breed, scarred from head to foot from previous encounters with

wild boars. They answered to the names of Pistola, Thomasio, Jerito, and Miguel. English words meant nothing to these dogs, but speak to them in Spanish and they were as alert as dogs could be. An expression such as "Sicola, Pistola! Coche! coche! Mira la coche!" ("Sic 'em Pistola! Pigs! pigs! Look at the pigs!") would set them all jumping and barking in anticipation of the chase.

Armed with an



The hunters' camp on Santa Cruz. Johnston is seen to the right, Gay in the centre, and the Author on the left.



ancient 45-70 black powder musket of almost prehistoric vintage, we put Quate in one sidecar, muttering something in Spanish about his preference for a horse. We put the four dogs in the other car, and with Mr. Gay, whom we know familiarly as "Pinkey," bringing up the rear on the solo motor-cycle, we set out for the hunting grounds. This was a place on the island known as the



The party on the road between the camp and Prisoners' Harbour.

South Ranch, where the old Spaniard declared our chances for finding game were excellent. The trip to the South Ranch was one of about twelve miles, and the road leading there lacked much of being a boulevard. We made the trip, however, in about forty minutes, with no inconvenience greater than some additional Castilian mutterings from Quate about his preference for a horse. Finally we came to a gate across the road where Quate declared we had better abandon the machines, for to proceed farther with them would probably scare the game away.

Setting out from the gate on foot, we soon encountered fresh boar tracks, and found numerous places where the ground had been newly uprooted in the animals' quests for food. The country at this point was a lofty grassy headland with scattered thickets of heavy brush, broken by numerous deep canyons and ravines. Presently we came to the wall of a very deep canyon where the dogs picked up a fresh trail, and went baying off into the thicket at the bottom. Almost at the same instant five boars tore out of the thicket, and headed up the opposite canyon wall with the speed of a herd of deer. It was long-range shooting, but we all got into action with our guns. "Ker-bung! Ker-bung!" roared Quate's black powder blunderbuss; "Ping! Ping! Ping!" sang Johnston's high-powered smokeless; while "Bang! Bang!" went "Pinkey's" deer gun. Johnston hit his porker with all three shots, but it took the third one to send him, hoofs up and squealing, crashing to the bottom of the canyon six hundred feet below, followed by an avalanche of loose dirt and rocks. "Pinkey" floored a fine-looking "meat pig" with his second shot, and the animal, falling through the brush of the canyon wall, lodged in the bushes

half-way down. Quate had apparently missed with both his shots, for when the smoke cleared away from in front of his black powder cannon we could see no trace of anything he had put down. As for myself, I singled out a monstrous black boar that was travelling for his health up the canyon wall, and let drive four shots at him from my high-powered smokeless automatic rifle. The first shot was apparently a clean miss, but the last three evidently found their mark, for the boar turned and bit at himself where he was struck even as he ran. Furthermore, I had actually seen the dust fly out of his bristles with each of the last three shots.

While our rifles were cracking, the dogs had reached the top of the canyon, and were going pell mell across the headland in the distance in the wake of the two boars that had reached the summit of the canyon wall. Quate, "Pinkey," and Johnston immediately began scrambling down the canyon wall, crossed the thicket at the bottom, scaled the wall on the opposite side, and set off on the run after the boars and the dogs. Meanwhile I was hot foot on the trail of "my" boar. Getting across the canyon and up the wall on the other side was a feat in itself, and by the time I arrived on the floor of the grassy headland where I had last seen the boar, I was pretty well winded. I was puffing like a porpoise, and with my heart beating like a compressed-air riveting hammer, I dropped in the grass, thinking to rest for a moment. As I sat down I put my hand in something wet—fresh blood. I was on the trail of my boar all right!

Momentarily forgetting my fatigue I took up the trail again. There was a distinct track leading off into a near-by jungle thicket. The brush was so thick that progress was a matter of inches per minute, but my



only thought at the moment was to get that massive head and the javelin-like tusks that adorned it. Flattening out like a horned toad, I began to wriggle in. Later I learned the foolhardiness of this venture, for Quate told me that following a wounded boar into a thicket is little short of attempted suicide. A wounded boar, he said, will charge like a streak of lightning through a thicket where a man is scarcely able to move at all. I realized then that there had been many minutes while I was crawling through the brush when, if the boar had charged, he would have had me like a rat in a trap.

### MY FIRST WILD BOAR.

I finally emerged into the sunlight again, and found myself on the edge of a large grassy area completely surrounded by a dense growth of jungle-like thicket. At the far end of this grassy stretch I could hear my boar grunting and squealing. He was badly wounded, and in a terrible rage. Sneaking up behind the low brush of the clearing, I finally caught sight of him. Blood was gushing from a bullet-hole in his left shoulder, and he was venting his wrath by lunging his tusks into the ground or against anything he came in contact with. After each onslaught he would back up for another rush, hurling great chunks of sod fifteen or twenty feet into the air. Several times as I was manoeuvring about to get a shot at him he charged the brush, and stout oak saplings were rooted skyward as if they had been stalks of corn. Finally he turned broadside toward me, and I let drive another bullet into his shoulder. Those .351 calibre soft-pointed missiles are like sticks of exploding dynamite when they hit, but that shot only further infuriated him; he took it without so much as turning a hair. A second, and a third shot had no more effect, but the fourth revealed to him the source of those whizzing hornets that tortured his flesh. With a bellow that set the whole landscape vibrating, and with the bristles of his back standing up like bundles of wire, he wheeled around and plunged at me, with his great knife-like tusks bared for action. There was just one more cartridge left in my rifle. With no time to reload, and having witnessed his propensity for assimilating lead, I had little confidence in my pistol. I knew that if the

rifle wouldn't finish him, the pistol would be like tickling him with a feather duster. Upon the work of that last remaining bullet, I realized, depended the question of which was to continue to live—the boar or me!

He was within twenty feet of me, and bearing down like something hurled from a catapult, when I drew a careful bead between his eyes and pulled trigger. That bullet, luckily for me, did its work! The boar collapsed as if every bone in his body had turned to water. With the momentum of his charge he turned a double somersault, landing in a heap at my feet—so close to me, in fact,



The Author with his first big boar.

that I had to jump aside to avoid being struck down by the hurtling carcass. He was stone dead, but to make assurance surer, I did not venture to touch him until I had reloaded my rifle and sent a bullet into his heart to be certain that he would not get to his hoofs and come at me again. The head of that old tusker will always be one of the most prized trophies in my collection, for if I live to be a hundred years old I can never forget that tense moment when his huge black bulk was bearing down upon me.

It was nearly an hour before the other hunters returned and began shouting through the brush in an effort to locate me. Their surprise can be better imagined than described when they crawled through the tangled vegetation and found me calmly smoking my pipe beside the body of what Quate declared to be the biggest boar ever seen or killed in his forty years on the island. The hunters had returned empty handed. The two boars that had gone over the hill had been chased for nearly two miles. Several times the dogs had had them cornered, but before the hunters could get up for a shot they broke and ran again. Finally the tuskers had made good their escape by plunging into an impenetrable thicket where neither dogs nor men could hope to follow.

Our next problem was that of getting the big boar to camp. He weighed five hundred pounds if he weighed an ounce, and it was as much as the four of us could do to budge him. In order to lighten him as much as possible Quate gutted him. This reduced the weight by fully a hundred pounds; and then, by dragging, carrying, and rolling him, inch by inch, we at last got him across the canyon to the sidecars. The great beast was a load for the little machine that flattened the



springs down against the chassis. The carcass was too big to go into the car, making it necessary to hang the huge head and shoulders out over the cowl, after this had been braced with pieces of oak to prevent its collapsing under the weight. After getting the big boar loaded for transportation to camp, we went back and got the head of Johnston's three hundred and fifty pound tusker. We also cut up "Pinkey's" "meat pig" for camp pork, and the dogs, still panting and exhausted from their hunting, made a meal of the liver. They were quite content to ride back to the ranch in the other sidecar with Quate, without being tied in, as had been necessary on the outward trip.

The next morning we had fresh pork chops for breakfast. The wild pork is chiefly acorn-fed, and is a meat that would have the approval of the most critical epicure. It is only the flesh of the young boars, however, that is fit for human food. We tried to eat some of the chops of my huge tusker, but it was as tough as a boot-sole, and had such a "piggy" flavour that we had to discard it.

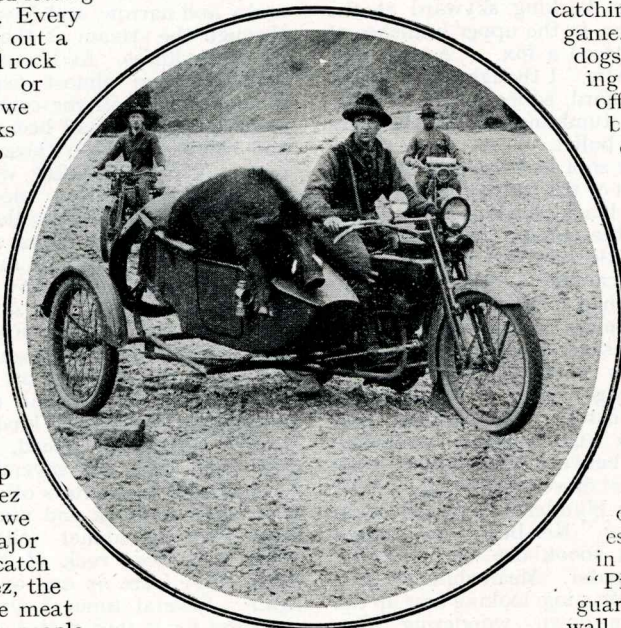
As a result of our strenuous efforts of the day before, we found ourselves somewhat stiff, and hence we were all in perfect accord when "Pinkey" suggested fishing down at Prisoners' Harbour as the programme for the day, with boar hunting to be resumed the day following. This plan was carried out by our touring down to the sea with the sidecars, where we loaded a sidecar with fish before the middle of the afternoon. As a matter of fact, it wasn't fishing at all. It was just a case of baiting a hook, throwing it into the water, and letting the fish leap at it. Every cast would bring out a two or four pound rock cod, sea bass, or white perch. If we put on two hooks we pulled out two fish, or, with three hooks, three fish—and so on up to the breaking strain of the line. With more fish than we knew what to do with, we knocked off an hour or two before sundown and toured up to the Ordoñez Ranch, where we donated the major portion of our catch to Peleg Vasquez, the ranch cook. The meat diet of the ranch people is chiefly mutton, hence

the fish were received with thorough appreciation. There was no dearth of human sustenance on Santa Cruz Island. We had brought over in the *Sea Wolf* enough food to last us a month, and on top of this we had more pork than we could ever hope to eat before it would spoil. Then we had discovered an ocean full of fine fish that were ours for the taking; and to further augment our already bulging larder, Johnston, while on the fishing trip, discovered a cove where the rocks were literally festooned with oysters and abalones, a great meaty shell-fish of palatable delicacy. To put the climax on the food situation, Quate strode into our camp that evening and deposited a basketful of fresh eggs and a two gallon demijohn of sweet milk. These he handed to us with the compliments of Señor Ordoñez.

For the next day's boar hunting Quate outlined a trip into El Portrero del Norte (the north pasture), one of the wildest and most picturesque sections of the island, where, he declared, the boars were so numerous that they were literally eating the scenery off the landscape! Although this location was some ten miles from the ranch, we were able to go to within two miles of it with the sidecars. We spent just an hour bouncing the old Spaniard and the dogs over the rough trail with the machines before we came to the end of vehicular possibilities, and set out into the hunting country on foot. Progress through the Portrero country was slow and tedious owing to the heavy brush and rough topography of the region. We encountered fresh boar signs, but hunted consistently for several hours without

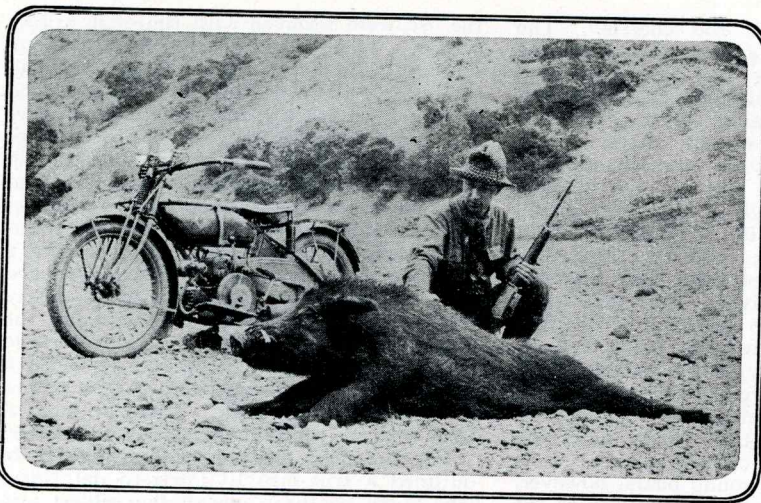
catching sight of any game. At last the dogs found a promising lead, and went off yelping and barking into a canyon thicket.

In another moment our campaign of action was outlined. Johnston, who was the best rifleman of our party, was to work his way around the head of the canyon, and take up his position on the opposite wall to cut off the possible escape of the game in that direction. "Pinkey" was to guard the near-by wall, while Quate and I were to drop to the



"Bringing home the bacon."





Mr. Hogg with the big boar shot in the canyon country.

bottom of the canyon, at widely separated points, to work down and up along the bottom of the gorge in the direction of the baying dogs. The fact that we heard no grunts or squeals to indicate boars led us to believe that the dogs were on the trail of some other game, but nevertheless we proposed to investigate.

Having somewhat of an advantage in years over the old Spaniard, I dropped to the bottom of the canyon with all possible speed, and reached the dogs some minutes ahead of Quate. Our conclusions as to the nature of the game were correct. Instead of boars, I found the dogs barking skyward at the foot of an oak tree, in the upper branches of which they had treed a fox. "A nice skin for a fur for my wife," I thought, as I took a bead on Mr. Reynard, squeezed the trigger, and brought him tumbling out of the treetop with a single bullet.

The echo of my shot had scarcely died out between the walls of the canyon when Quate cut loose with his black powder artillery from some point down the canyon. Simultaneously it sounded as if Bedlam had broken loose. From down the canyon a little below the point to which I had descended there came a perfect pandemonium of squeals, snorts, and bellowings. At the same time I heard Johnston call out from his position on the canyon wall: "There they go, 'Pink'! Let 'em have it!" Then Johnston's rifle cracked, and the echo of his high-powered smokeless was still rolling between the canyon walls when "Pinkey" let drive from his side of the wall, and Quate's blunderbuss roared again with its detonating "Ker-bung! ker-bung! Ker-bung!" that shook the whole canyon like a peal of thunder. Meanwhile, there I stood like a bump on a log, looking first up the canyon and then down, wondering from what direction, and when, the show was

going to begin for me. Of all the fish in the sea, I felt that I was about the fishiest at that moment. There I had been, right in the midst of a herd of boars, and had let those fool dogs pull me off on the trail of a fox! I heard Johnston's rifle crack again, and again, and again, the last shot being accompanied by the sound of a heavy body crashing into the bottom of the canyon. Then the hunter's voice

rang out: "I got that one, 'Pinkey,'" he cried. "Quick! cut off that big fellow! He's going down the canyon!" This was interesting for me indeed, for if there was a boar heading down the canyon he must be travelling my way. The dogs, meanwhile, had posted off toward the scene of activity—I knew not in what direction.

Upon hearing Johnston's voice, and the sharp staccato "Bang!" of "Pinkey's" rifle, I spun round on my heel and started up the canyon. I had, scarcely gone ten yards before I ran right into the source of all the rumpus. The canyon at this point was very rocky and narrow, and I was splashing along through the stream at the bottom in water up to my knees. As I rounded a right-angle bend between almost perpendicular cliffs it seemed that all the combined noises of a circus menagerie had been let loose to echo and rumble between those narrow walls of rock. The atmosphere was a Bedlam of intermingled bellows, snorts, grunts, and squeals, accompanied by the barking of dogs and a crashing of rocks and boulders. I jumped upon a flat rock on the floor of the canyon, and stood with my rifle raised ready for action. About the same instant, just about fifty feet in front of me, I saw a huge boar coming down the canyon with Pistola and Jerito dangling on his ears. Thomasio was hanging on his tail, and Miguel was snapping at the beast's hind legs. The boar lunged stubbornly ahead, taking all four dogs with him, and several times managed to shake his tormentors off. The dogs, however, were as quick and nimble as cats, and they were no sooner rolled aside in the water and loose rock of the canyon floor before they were up and on to their quarry again. Several times I drew a bead upon the boar for a shot that I calculated would mean instant death for him, but in the free-



for-all scrap between boar and dogs, I didn't dare to shoot for fear of killing one of our faithful little comrades.

After several fruitless attempts to get clear the boar made a clean break down the canyon. This was my chance, and I let him have it. The bullet caught him on the left shoulder and toppled him against the canyon wall. It didn't floor him, by any means—the bullet only staggered him—but his hesitation was fatal, for at the same instant the dogs were atop of him again. Recovering somewhat from the shock of the bullet, the old tusker lunged forth again with what I conjectured to be his dying effort. He arose on his hind hoofs, stretching himself upright, with a dog dangling from each ear. There was just time enough for me to swing my rifle into position and blaze away. The bullet took him between the forelegs, and with a stifled grunt he collapsed like a wet rag, shot through the heart. He was a magnificent specimen, weighing about four hundred pounds, and with a beautiful pair of recurved ivory tusks nearly five inches long.

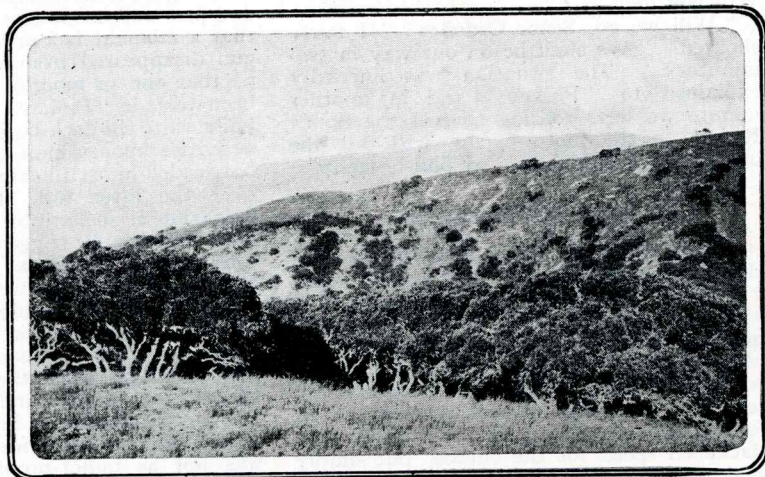
I had hardly succeeded in pulling the dogs off the carcass when Johnston and "Pinkey" came running down the canyon. They had been trailing the boar I had killed, and had virtually chased him in front of my gun. Johnston had accounted for two big tuskers; "Pinkey" had disposed of two more. Presently Quate came trudging up the canyon carrying another fox, and proudly announcing that he had a fine mess of pork chops a couple of hundred yards below.

### CASUALTIES.

By the time we had taken the heads of the five boars, quartered Quate's hams and chops, skinned the two foxes, and lugged the whole outfit to the sidecars, all of us were pretty well fatigued. Pistola, the best of our hunting dogs, had received an ugly tusk-slash across the back of his neck. The dog, however, hadn't suffered the only casualty. I found myself in agony from several cuts and numerous scratches where I had snagged myself in plunging over the rocks and through the brush. These minor injuries had gone unnoticed while the excitement was on, but after

it was all over they became painfully evident. Two of the remaining dogs were also suffering from minor slashes, and the fourth dog was travelling on three legs as a result of my big boar having fallen on him when shot down. Johnston had lost the seat of his breeches, and a generous layer of skin immediately beneath, through losing his footing and doing a toboggan act down the wall of the canyon. His left elbow was also badly gashed. "Pinkey" was in agony as a result of having chased one of his boars through a thicket of cactus. Our old guide, Quate, was the only member of the party who had come off without a scratch. Our "first aid" outfit came in mighty handy that evening, and there was a healthy demand all round for iodine and bandages.

On the second day after our hunt in the Portrero Canyon, Señor Ordoñez came into our camp on horseback. He had not had his breakfast, so we prepared a meal for him, and for an hour or two afterward he sat in camp with us drinking coffee and telling us interesting stories about the island. The most startling tale that he told concerned the heavy losses he had suffered from stock "rustlers," who land on the island to steal cattle and sheep. He estimated that his losses for the previous year from this source had been in the neighbourhood of ten thousand dollars. The thieves, he said, were mostly Japanese, Austrian, and other aliens, unnaturalized in the United States, who pretended to be "fishermen" in order to escape the vagrancy courts, but who actually are professional stock-thieves. Owing to the great size of the island, and the rugged nature of its topography, he declared, it was almost impossible to land any of these rogues in the hands of the law, but as a measure which seemed to offer some possibility of relief, they had recently obtained



Typical wild boar country on Santa Cruz Island.



the co-operation of the coastguard service in an effort to kill or capture the thieves. We told Señor Ordoñez that if we could be of any assistance to him in the protection of his property, it would be a great pleasure to us. Little did we dream at that moment that our volunteering such aid was, a few days later, to lead us into an exciting duel with the bandits!

All too quickly our days on the island slipped away, and at last the time came for us to begin thinking about breaking camp and moving down to Prisoners' Harbour to meet Captain Eaton and the *Sea Wolf*. We had eighteen pairs of boar tusks, and several fine heads prepared for the taxidermist. The trip had been a thorough success, and we were reluctant to face the prospect of going home. I was acting as camp cook, and was tossing up griddle cakes for breakfast over the collapsible sheet-metal stove. "Pinkey" and Johnston were busy over their tin plates, devouring the feathery cakes, when our breakfast was most unceremoniously interrupted. Into the camp at a gallop, his horse lathered with foam, came Señor Ordoñez. He was obviously excited, and from the expression on his face it was evident that something serious was troubling him. As he sprang from the saddle he addressed Johnston and me in Spanish. "I came here to see if I could get you boys to help us," he burst out. "Quate has just telephoned from the South Ranch that he and Pablo Ybarra, Jose Bianca, and Jesus Devega, three of our *vagueros*, are standing off a band of ten or fifteen Japanese cattle-thieves at the South Ranch Landing. The villains are loading our cattle aboard a schooner. Our men are hopelessly outnumbered, and helpless without reinforcements. We have men at the ranch, but it would take them an hour to get to Quate's aid on horseback. You boys can get there in half the time with your motor-cycles. Will you go? Will you help us?"

"Will we go, Señor Ordoñez?" I fairly shouted. "We shall be on our way in two minutes!" The situation was hurriedly explained to "Pinkey," and in another minute we were roaring toward the South Ranch on the motor-cycles, with all the firearms and ammunition we had in camp.

### A RIDE TO REMEMBER.

Of all the wild motor-cycle riding that three human beings ever did, I believe that "Pinkey," Johnston, and I established a world's record for speed over the eighteen miles of tortuous, bumpy road between our camp and the South Ranch. With the motors roaring we tore over the trail, utterly disregarding ruts and bumps, streams to be forded, and everything else. We never even slackened speed for the curves, but simply skidded round them, leaving clouds of dust,

and the smell of burning tyre rubber behind us. Our sole prayer was that the machines would stand up under the punishment and hang together to get us to the South Ranch. Suffice it to say that the machines *did* hang together. We covered those eighteen miles of profanity-provoking roads in exactly twenty-six minutes from the time we left our camp.

Arriving at the hill top just beyond the South Ranch landing, we espied a small schooner, with her mainsail set, in the act of drifting out into the cove. Quate, and the other three cowpunchers, were scattered about behind various rocks, banging away with their black-powder blunderbusses at the fleeing schooner. The pirates aboard the vessel were returning the fire. Hastily we grabbed our rifles and dropped for cover behind various rocks. Little puffs of smoke and fire were spurting out of the schooner's deck-house, and the air around us was alive with the drone of bullets. Just as Johnston dropped behind a rock and poked his rifle out for a pot-shot at the pirate craft, a bullet chipped the rock, the flying fragment tearing his hat into shreds. This so enraged him that I could hear him cursing above the cracking of the guns. Utterly disregarding his own safety he sprang to his feet and centred his sights upon a man who was going up the schooner's mainmast, apparently to make some adjustment to the sail. Almost at the same instant the sharp "Ping!" of his rifle rang out, and the Japanese on the mainmast turned over, plunging like a dropped football, and fell with a heavy thud upon the deck of the schooner, where he lay motionless. "Got him!" I heard Johnston exclaim, as he pumped the bolt of his weapon to throw a fresh cartridge into the firing chamber. Meanwhile "Pinkey" and I were putting a hail of lead into the schooner's deck-house. A gun that had been persistently cracking from the starboard window suddenly dropped out on to the deck, and the face that a moment before had been behind the gun disappeared from view, announcing to us that one or more of our bullets had not been wasted. "Pinkey" continued to hurl his bullets into the deck-house, while I centred my activities upon a man at the tiller who had barricaded himself behind a mattress thrown over the after rail. I emptied a whole magazine of shells into the mattress as fast as I could pull trigger, and as I reached into my pocket for a fresh magazine and clapped it into the weapon, the schooner swung around broadside to the wind. As it did so the mattress no longer obscured the after deck. The tiller was banging backwards and forwards with the wash of the sea against the rudder, and the man who had been manipulating it lay sprawled out flat on the deck. It was evident that the mattress was not as bullet-proof as the helmsman thought it was.



Another Japanese sprang out of the deck-house and got hold of the tiller handle. He pulled the mattress round so as to keep himself behind it, all the while keeping up a steady fire over the top of it with an automatic pistol. "Pinkey" and I again concentrated our fire on the mattress, but by this time the schooner was getting well out to sea, so that it is probable we only wasted our bullets. In the midst of all this

firing a bullet struck the muzzle of Johnston's rifle and knocked the weapon into bits. The shock stung his hands until they became almost useless, and several small fragments of lead embedded themselves in his forehead. Without even stopping to take stock of his injuries, Johnston hurled the broken rifle aside, ran to one of the motor-cycles, under a hail of bullets from the schooner, and returned with another rifle and two boxes of ammunition. Then, with his benumbed fingers, he went on hurling a stream of lead as best he could at the pirate craft.

We kept up the bombardment until the schooner got so far out to sea that our bullets began to fall short. Further shooting was merely a waste of ammunition, and so we ceased firing and came out from behind the cover of our sheltering rocks. With no boat with which to give chase nearer than Prisoners' Harbour, the bandits had made good their getaway. Quate came out from behind his rock and shook his fist at the receding schooner, cursing with such a picturesque vocabulary of Castilian profanity that it would be utterly impossible even to attempt translating his mutterings into English. "At least forty head of the Señor's cattle are aboard the schooner of those infamous scoundrels!" the old Spaniard raged. "The cowardly sneak-thief devils! I'd gouge their eyes out with my fingers if I could but get my hands on them! Forty head of the Señor's cattle," he moaned, "and here we stand by and watch them put to sea to sell their ill-gotten gains on the mainland!"

#### JUST IN TIME.

The old Spaniard was still raving with anger when I chanced to glance out at sea to a point some sixty or seventy degrees to



**Santa Cruz scenery. The tracks were not of the best, but the motor-cycles contrived to negotiate them.**

the west of the pirate schooner, which by this time was almost out of sight. A tiny smudge of black smoke had appeared on the horizon. "Quate," I exclaimed, grasping him by the arm. "Look! There's a steamer!" Thereupon the old Spaniard crossed himself, and called upon all the saints and the Holy Virgin to assist him. Then, without another word, he ran to the ranch house, and presently returned with an arm full of smoke-rockets. By this time the hull of the steamer had begun to loom above the horizon, and with my field-glasses I made out that the craft was a coastguard gunboat. I imparted this information to Quate, who was so delighted that he grabbed me in his arms and kissed me. Then a rocket was sent aloft as a signal to the gunboat. The first rocket, and a second, failed to elicit any response, but a third rocket brought the deep "Boom!" of a four-inch naval gun floating over the sea. I looked again with the glasses, and could see that the craft had changed its course and was heading toward the island. At that moment Señor Ordoñez came galloping on to the scene on horseback, and as we saw the gunboat coming, all our hats were thrown in the air with shouts of rejoicing over this unexpected turn of affairs.

Half an hour later the gunboat dropped anchor in the cove, a boat was lowered, and two officers came ashore. It took but a moment to explain what had happened, and at the officers' suggestion our entire party went aboard the craft to see the chase and the subsequent capture of the outlaws. By this time the bandit schooner had gone completely out of sight over the horizon, but we knew the general direction they had taken in their flight. Furthermore, when the twin screws of the gunboat began to revolve



under a full head of steam, pushing the craft along at a speed of something like twenty knots, we knew that the cattle thieves were as good as captured already!

By the time we overhauled the outlaw vessel, the highest peaks of Santa Cruz Island had dipped below the horizon, and the scenery consisted solely of sky and water. As we came alongside the bandit craft the decks of the gunboat were cleared for action. Two four-inch guns were swung into position for a finishing shot if necessary, but the outlaws surrendered without a further blow being struck. With the array of naval artillery that stared them in the faces, they knew that the gunboat could send their old windjammer to Davy Jones's locker, with all hands aboard, with a single shot. Accordingly, the whole crew—or what was left of them—appeared on deck holding their hands aloft to indicate surrender. The gunboat came alongside the schooner and made fast. Then, one by one, nine of the most villainous-looking Japanese that I ever set eyes upon were marched on to the deck of the coastguard craft, clapped in irons, and dumped unceremoniously below. There were six of the schooner's crew, however, who didn't march aboard the gunboat. Three of them were dead, and three more were so badly wounded that they had to be carried aboard the naval craft and deposited in the vessel's sick bay.

It was only after we had had the opportunity of going aboard the pirate craft that we realized the havoc that we had wrought with our rifles while firing upon the thieves from the shore. The deck-house of the schooner was a mass of splintered and bullet-riddled woodwork, while the deck itself was full of furrows. The mattress abaft the tiller was peppered full of holes, like a piece of Swiss cheese.

Beneath the deck, taken into the craft through a specially built door in the hull, and with a gang-plank constructed for the purpose of loading livestock, were thirty-eight head of Señor Ordoñez's cattle. Señor Ordoñez and his men had laboured by the sweat of their brows to produce these cattle, and here were those alien thieves, masquerading under the guise of law-abiding fishermen, preying upon the fruits of their efforts.

After the officers of the gunboat had inspected the wreckage about the deck of the schooner, a seaman was detailed for duty at the tiller of the captured craft. A line was then made fast to her bow from the gunboat, and the whole outfit was towed back to Santa Cruz Island. Meanwhile Johnston had sought the services of the Medical Corps seaman aboard the gunboat, who picked the fragments of lead from his forehead, painted him with iodine, and sent him on deck with his head in bandages and smelling like a

chemist's shop. Quate was probably the happiest man on the boat, and Señor Ordoñez could find no words, even in his remarkably expressive Castilian, sufficient to express his satisfaction. Before we reached the island, however, one of the three wounded Japanese breathed his last, and his body was added to the three covered with a sheet on the deck of the gunboat awaiting delivery to the coroner of Santa Barbara County. The injuries of the remaining two were not serious, and after being prisoners in the hospital ward of a jail in Santa Barbara, they were turned over intact to the Federal authorities to face the law courts along with the other nine. In due course they received indeterminate sentences of from ten to fifty years each in Federal prison after a trial by jury in Los Angeles.

After landing on the island the balance of the day was spent taking affidavits and depositions for use when the eleven cattle thieves should be brought before the courts. This work, which was carried on by Señor Ordoñez with the aid of the gunboat's officers, was made both difficult and tedious by the fact that none of the prisoners could speak either English or Spanish. Finally, with the pirate schooner in tow, and the prisoners in safe keeping, the gunboat steamed away toward Santa Barbara.

Señor Ordoñez insisted that we should be his guests at dinner at his house that evening, and since we had become a bit weary of camp cookery, we cheerfully accepted his invitation. At the ranch house several hours later we sat down to a meal that was little short of a banquet.

Before we left our host that evening he shook hands with us all around, and again assured us that he could find no words to express his appreciation of what we had done for him. "If you ever want to hunt again on this island," he said, "or if there is anything else you want here, just let the fact be known, and if it is anything that we can supply, you shall receive it." His last act was to present Johnston with his personal cheque, to which he had appended his signature, but had not filled out for any stipulated sum. "Take this, señor," he said, "and when you get home, go to your gunsmith and select the rifle that suits you."

Next day we broke camp, and moved down to Prisoners' Harbour, to find Captain Eaton with the *Sea Wolf* riding at anchor. Soon we had our motor-cycles and the rest of the outfit aboard, pulled up anchor, and put to sea. As we sailed out into that placid indigo ocean, with the highest peaks of Santa Cruz gradually sinking below the horizon, the island looked so peaceful and quiet that it took a long stretch of imagination to picture it as the abode of vicious wild boars and the scene of such deadly strife as we had recently witnessed.





"I HAD TO JUMP ASIDE TO AVOID BEING STRUCK DOWN."

(SEE PAGE 92.)